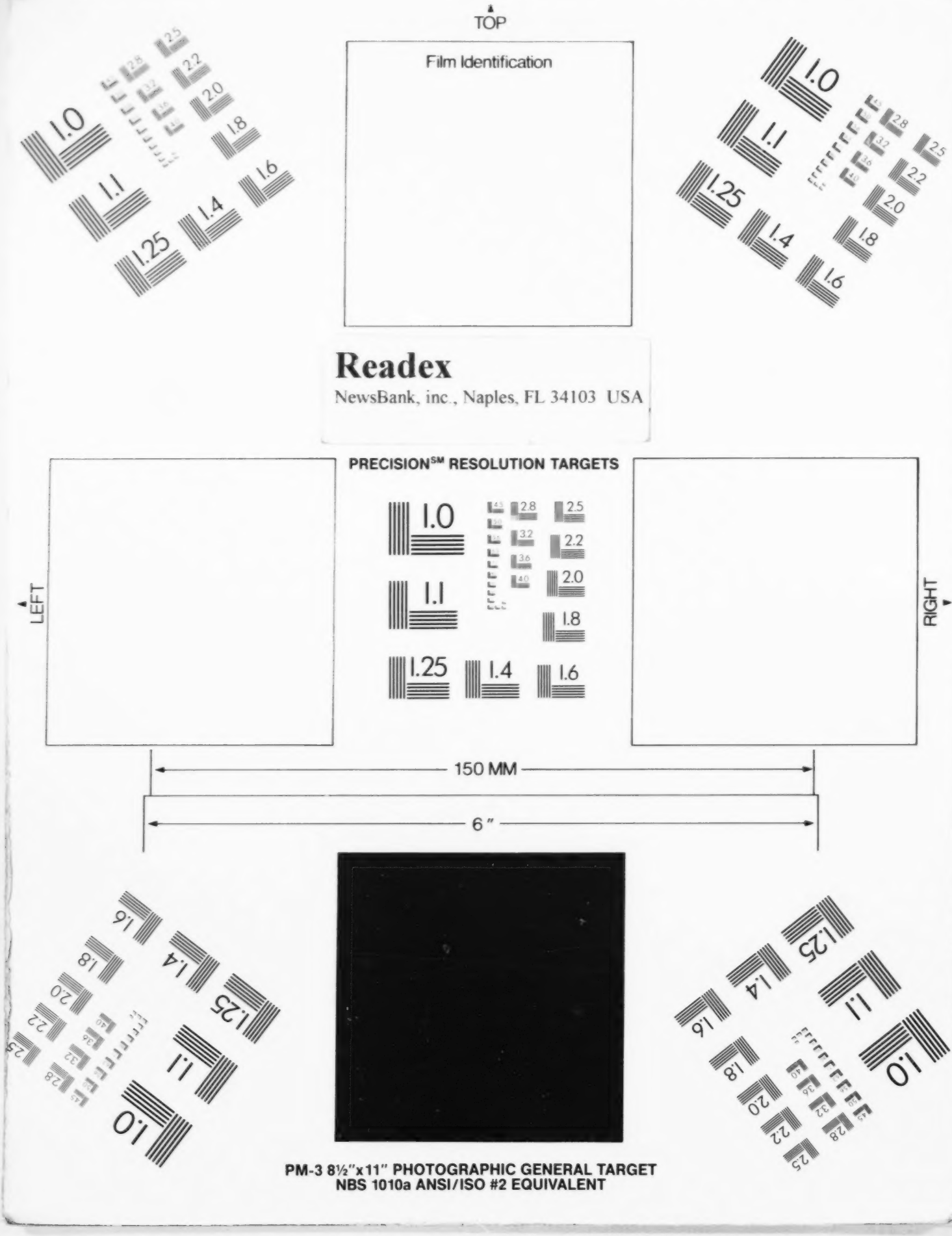


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United Nations A/AC.183/SR.269

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 March 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 269th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 February 2003, at 3 p.m.

*Temporary Chairman*: Mr. Riza (Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General)
*Chairman*: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

03-25214 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Election of officers**

2. **The Temporary Chairman** invited the Committee to consider nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Committee.

3. **Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus) said that the Committee's programme of work for 2002 had been successfully implemented, and that its current composition should be maintained in order to ensure the same high level of performance in 2003. He therefore wished to propose Mr. Fall (Senegal) for re-election to the office of Chairman, Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) and Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) for re-election to the two offices of Vice-Chairman and Mr. Balzan (Malta) for re-election to the office of Rapporteur. He also wished to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and to establish peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions.

4. **Ms. Ndhlovu** (South Africa) seconded the nominations.

5. *Mr. Fall (Senegal), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) and Mr. Balzan (Malta) were elected by acclamation.*

6. *Mr. Fall (Senegal) took the Chair.*

**Statement by the Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General**

7. **Mr. Riza** (Under-Secretary-General and Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General), speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, congratulated the Chairman and members of the Bureau on their unanimous re-election to the leadership of the Committee. The current situation between Palestinians and Israelis remained extremely dangerous. The world should not fall into the trap of imagining that it could not get any worse; it easily could. Already, the human cost of the crisis had been appalling. Since September 2000, more than 3,200 people had lost their lives — the great majority of them Palestinians, but also many Israelis. Thousands more on both sides had been wounded, again preponderantly Palestinians. Deplorably, the majority of the victims had been civilians, many of them children.

8. Stifling closures and curfews, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, house demolitions, continuing settlement activity and the often excessive use of force by Israel had only added to long-standing Palestinian anger and resentment. At the same time, cruel and devastating terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, including suicide bombings, had revived old fears. Because of that spiral of action and counteraction — because of that pervasive climate of recrimination, retribution and deep mutual distrust — the reserves of good will that had existed a decade ago seemed to have been virtually exhausted.

9. Still, there was a way out. A broad consensus had emerged on the need for a two-State solution. The "road map" that had been drawn up by the Quartet — the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations — aimed to help realize the vision, set out in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. The "road map" was intended to achieve a settlement founded on the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991, the principle of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), agreements previously reached by the parties and the initiative of the Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, which had been endorsed by the Arab League at its Beirut summit in March 2002. The road map was performance-based and hope-driven, with clearly defined phases and realistic time lines and target dates. Its implementation would end the occupation that had begun in 1967, establish an independent, viable and democratic Palestine within three years, bring hope to Palestinians and ensure security for Israelis. It should settle not only the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also promote peace in the broader region, including the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

10. Achieving that objective would of course require great patience and tenacity on the part of all involved. One key factor would be the willingness of Palestinians and Israelis to take parallel steps in the security, institution-building, humanitarian and political areas. Indeed, progress in any one of those areas was heavily dependent on progress in the others. Moving ahead in tandem offered the most promising path away from the

current impasse and towards a reactivation of the political dialogue. The Quartet stood ready to facilitate that process. Ultimately, however, the parties themselves had to summon political will, show good faith and demonstrate a readiness to make the painful compromises that would fulfil the mutual obligations outlined in the "road map".

11. An important factor would be Palestinian reform. Efforts in that direction had already begun and should be viewed as part of the broader framework of steps outlined in the "road map." He urged the Government of Israel to support that Palestinian-driven process by creating conditions that would lead to the normalization of Palestinian life. In particular, Israel should expedite the withdrawal of its troops from Palestinian areas occupied since September 2000, immediately freeze all settlement activity, end the practice of house demolitions, lift restrictions on the movement of people, goods and essential services and disburse in full revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority. Israel should also abide fully by its obligations under international humanitarian law, especially the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention).

12. Palestinian groups for their part should unconditionally cease all terrorist acts, and the Palestinian Authority should do everything in its power to combat terrorism. As he had said repeatedly, attacks that targeted civilians were heinous and morally repellent, regardless of whether their perpetrators saw them as reprisals for acts by the other side.

13. International help remained vital. The Palestinian people were in dire need of humanitarian assistance and emergency relief. The Palestinian economy had suffered a catastrophic decline. United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), would continue their efforts. UNRWA remained the main provider of basic services to more than 3.9 million registered Palestine refugees. Commissioner-General Peter Hansen and his staff were helping to deliver those services in extremely difficult circumstances, often at risk to their own lives. UNRWA was currently facing an especially severe financial crisis. Unless the international community provided immediate assistance, the emergency operations of UNRWA in the West Bank and Gaza could come to a halt by the end of March. He called on donors to contribute generously in a time of acute hardship.

14. For his part, he wished to reassure the Committee of his deep personal commitment to working with all concerned for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. His Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, would continue to work closely with the parties. The outlines of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region were clear. But peace could not be imposed on the parties. Nor could a lasting solution be found by force. It must be achieved through a political process that took the legitimate aspirations of both peoples fully into account. The Committee had an important role to play as common efforts towards that long-sought goal continued. He wished it every success in its sustained and dedicated efforts.

**Statement by the Chairman**

15. **The Chairman**, speaking as the representative of Senegal, expressed his gratitude for the Committee's renewed confidence in Senegal, which he viewed as an incentive to pursue with increased fervour its work in advocating and promoting international recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. He also paid tribute to his fellow officers for their dedication to the Palestinian cause and expressed gratitude for their assistance. Aware of the Secretary-General's concern over the deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and the unprecedented humanitarian crisis it had triggered in the Middle East, he endorsed the Secretary-General's sound proposal to deploy a credible multinational force or international observers to break, for once and for all, the destructive cycle of violence and horror in that tormented part of the world.

16. The Committee urged the members of the Quartet — the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations — to redouble their efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the "road map" with a view to transforming into reality President Bush's vision, endorsed by the Arab Peace Initiative adopted at the Arab League Summit held in Beirut and contained in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002),

of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. The Committee would continue to work tirelessly to mobilize international public opinion to remove the obstacles to peace with a view to bringing about the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. He wished to pay tribute to the vital role played by non-governmental organizations and civil society in mobilizing political support and economic assistance for the Palestinian people. The Committee's draft programme of work for 2003 contemplated greater cooperation with such entities, as well as parliaments, the media, universities and women's groups.

17. The past year had witnessed the pursuit of the intifada, in reaction to the provocation and the humiliation inflicted on the Palestinian people. The Committee was deeply distressed by the illegal and unacceptable acts imposed on the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority by the Hebrew State, in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and in disregard of international humanitarian law. Against that backdrop, the United Nations had the obligation to continue assuming its responsibilities towards the Palestinian people until such time as their rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty were fully restored in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. In that connection, greater resources must be allocated to promoting the economic, social and cultural development of the future State of Palestine. The Committee was firmly committed to working with all the principal actors to seek a negotiated solution; given the historic, geographic and cultural links between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, there was no alternative to peaceful coexistence.

18. In conclusion he wished to pay tribute to Yasser Arafat for his courage, indomitable faith and qualities as a statesman, which had enabled him to resist, with great tranquillity, all the physical and psychological suffering deliberately and unjustly imposed on him by Tel Aviv. He as Chairman and the Committee members renewed their solemn commitment to continue to recommend to the General Assembly and Security Council any initiative for the peaceful attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to listen carefully to non-governmental organizations and civil society. He placed great hope in the imminent adoption of the peace plan elaborated by the Quartet, which he urged to work towards the convening of a Middle East peace conference that would give birth to the free and sovereign State of Palestine.

19. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that it would not be easy for the Chairman to carry out his duties in the light of the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian lands and the occupation in general; however, she was confident that, under his leadership, major successes would nonetheless be achieved with the full backing of his own and many other countries. Her delegation would do its utmost to ensure that the Chairman was given all the necessary support and cooperation to that end. She also wished to express appreciation to the Division for Palestinian Rights for its excellent work, and to the Secretary-General for his efforts, which reflected his personal commitment to a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and to achieving both the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including independence and sovereignty, and peace in the Middle East. Her delegation also looked forward to working with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to bring about an independent Palestine.

**Report by the Chairman on developments since the previous meeting**

20. **The Chairman** noted the overwhelming support of the General Assembly for the four resolutions submitted to it by the Committee. The General Assembly's vote had made clear the importance attached by the vast majority of States to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and had reaffirmed the fact that the responsibility of the United Nations concerning the question of Palestine would not end until all aspects of the question were settled.

21. On 29 November 2002, he had met with members of the Steering Committee of non-governmental organizations established at the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People to brief them on the mandate of the Committee and its work with civil society worldwide. The members had in turn informed him of their own activities and initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and suggested ways of improving cooperation and coordination between the Committee and civil society.

22. On 20 December 2002, the Security Council had met to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". On that occasion the Syrian Arab Republic had introduced a draft resolution by which the Council would, in particular, condemn the killing by the Israeli occupying forces of several United Nations employees and demand that Israel should comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Following discussion, the Council had voted on the draft, which had received 12 votes in favour and two abstentions, but had not been adopted because of a negative vote by a permanent member.

23. On 13 January 2003, he had addressed a letter on behalf of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of Greece, whose country currently held the presidency of the European Union, expressing the Committee's sincere wish to see the useful dialogue established between the Committee and the delegation of the European Union in 1997 continue to develop and strengthen over the following six months.

24. On 30 January 2003, he had addressed a letter to the Secretary-General expressing the Committee's position regarding the closure by the Israel Defense Forces of Hebron University and Palestine Polytechnic University. Such action was deemed by the Committee to constitute flagrant and illegal acts of collective punishment. He had accordingly requested the Secretary-General to bring the matter to the attention of the international community, and had urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices with the Government of Israel in order that the situation would be redressed and the two universities reopened without delay.

25. If there were no other comments, he would take it that the Committee wished to take note of the information he had presented.

26. *It was so decided.*

**Draft programme of work of the Committee** (A/AC.183/2003/CRP.1)

27. **The Chairman**, introducing the draft programme of work for 2003 contained in document A/AC.183/2003/CRP.1, noted that section I summarized the resolutions adopted at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly concerning the respective mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information.

28. Under section II of the draft programme dealing with priority issues, he drew attention to paragraphs 8, 9 and 10, in which the Committee expressed the view that its programme of activities made a valuable contribution to heightening international awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, stressed the need for continued support to the political process, and referred to the importance of cooperation and coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

29. The activities of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, outlined under section III, included action taken to promote understanding of the Committee's objectives, organize meetings and conferences, enhance cooperation with civil society, develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, and implement the Division's publications programme.

30. *The draft programme of work of the Committee for 2003 (A/AC.183/2003/CRP.1) was adopted.*

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

31. **The Chairman** said that several important events had taken place since the previous meeting. At the same time, the situation on the ground remained extremely serious and the humanitarian crisis was becoming more grave with each passing day. He invited the Observer for Palestine to take stock of the situation and explain the Palestinian position.

**Statement by the Permanent Observer for Palestine**

32. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that there were regrettably no positive developments to report on in the period. The Palestinian people continued to suffer from the wrath and brutality of the occupying forces and every aspect of life had been affected by the Israeli military campaign. The return of the Likud government to power had only strengthened the hand of the Israeli right wing against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority.

33. The implementation of the Quartet's Road Map and peace efforts continued to be delayed and even obstructed, and peace efforts, such as the London

Conference convened by Prime Minister Blair, continued to be undermined. The Palestinian people under Israeli occupation continued to suffer extreme hardships, including further loss of life, injury and destruction at the hands of the occupying forces, including colonial settlers. The total number of Palestinians killed by the Israeli occupying forces since September 2000 had surpassed 2,100 martyrs.

34. During the same period, the occupying Power had continued and even intensified its wanton destruction of Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure and agricultural lands. In addition, the Palestinian economy had also suffered gravely as a result of the occupying Power's continued imposition of the severest restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including for medical and humanitarian purposes, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Twenty-four hour curfews continued to be imposed on the Palestinian civilian population, and in recent weeks several Palestinian universities and radio and television stations had been subjected to military closures. The imposition of such forms of collective punishment by Israel not only hampered normal Palestinian activity, but had also greatly hindered the work of United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations providing assistance to the Palestinian people. Such restrictions had also seriously obstructed the functioning of the Palestinian Authority, including obstruction of the holding of the Palestinian general election that had been scheduled for January 2003.

35. The constant Israeli military siege on the Occupied Palestinian Territory had further deepened the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people. That tragic situation could only continue to deteriorate with the ongoing perpetration of Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, in serious violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

36. Although it was difficult to be optimistic about the near future, she remained hopeful that the international community would intensify political efforts towards bringing an end to the Israeli occupation, which was the root source of all the strife and misery, and towards the achievement of a final and peaceful settlement, including the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

*The meeting rose at 3.15 p.m.*

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.270

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 April 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 270th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 26 March 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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Adoption of the agenda

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, 13-14 May, and Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 15 May 2003, Kyiv

Report by the Chairman on his attendance at the Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, Kuala Lumpur, 20-25 February 2003

Other matters

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03-29713 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

2. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that he had sent a letter to the Secretary-General dated 20 February 2003 (A/ES-10/218-S/2003/202) to express concern at the Israeli military authorities' plan to seize land in Bethlehem and expel Palestinians from the town, and to point out that the Committee was alarmed by the Israeli Government's moves to implement the "seam line area plan", a unilateral separation plan challenging the Green Line.

3. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that he wished first to describe the internal Palestinian situation. Most of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority had been destroyed by the vicious and bloody military campaign waged by Israel since September 2000. That had combined with often unjustified external pressure to disrupt the political process in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization, at its meeting of 8 March 2003, had taken the important step of accepting President Arafat's proposal to ask the Palestinian Legislative Council to alter the Palestinian Authority Basic Law and create the post of Prime Minister. Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, had been appointed to the post. He would have full authority to perform his functions under the presidential system, and had been given three weeks in which to present a Government to the Palestinian Legislative Council for a vote of confidence.

4. It was hoped that Israel, the occupying Power, and the international community would support the new Palestinian Government to change the situation in the region, but the Palestinians were not optimistic that such support would be given. The obstacle to a peaceful settlement of the conflict was not the internal situation of the Palestinians but the entrenched Israeli position of refusing to establish the political conditions needed for such a settlement. The Israeli Government had not made a tactical change, but had returned to the position of the past, that of Yitzhak Shamir and others: it was seeking to establish a "greater Israel", to expand the country's borders and to effectively prevent the establishment of any meaningful, sovereign Palestinian State in the territory occupied since 1967. Unless the international community took a firmer stand against the Israeli position, it would remain unchanged.

5. Secondly, he wished to talk about the road map for peace in the Middle East, prepared by the Quartet, consisting of the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the United Nations. Although the Palestinian side had reservations regarding the road map, it was prepared to accept and implement it. The same could not be said of Israel, which had called for substantial changes to the document. He had heard recently that Mr. Mofaz, the Minister of Defence and former Chief of Staff, regarded by Palestinians as a war criminal, was drafting an alternative plan.

6. Publication of the road map was still being delayed by Israel, which had said originally that publication could happen after its general elections, then after the new Israeli Government had been installed, then after the war in Iraq, then after the Palestinian Government had assumed office. President Bush had expressed his personal commitment to the road map and to its immediate publication once the new Palestinian Government was in office, but that commitment had been accompanied by worrisome additions which might open the door to unlimited changes to the document, making it useless in practice.

7. The Palestinian side saw little cause for optimism, but was waiting patiently for practical steps to be taken to translate the road map into action. Its basic position had not changed: there could be no solid foundation for the Middle East peace process without the necessary legal authority, which could come only from the United Nations Security Council. The appropriate Security Council resolution, and the adoption of the road map, were still awaited. Such action would move the process to a new stage for both Palestinians and Israelis.

8. His third point related to the monthly briefing which Mr. Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, had given to the Security Council on 19 March 2003. The descriptions and data which he had provided had revealed a worrying situation on the ground. He had also set out a clear position on the road map, since the United Nations was

a member of the Quartet: it should be adopted immediately and without amendment.

9. While he commended both the Special Coordinator and the mission with which he had been entrusted, he took issue with some aspects of the briefing. Firstly, it had used terminology which was not consistent with United Nations policy, substituting "West Bank and Gaza Strip" for the accepted "occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem". Secondly, it had failed to provide a legal and political context for the situation, which was one of foreign occupation. Thirdly, it had made no clear reference to the fourth Geneva Convention and the obligations of occupying Powers. Those misgivings would be brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator.

10. His fourth point related to Palestinian concerns that the war with Iraq was going ahead without Security Council authorization and that it would result in suffering for the Iraqi people and possible ramifications for the people of Palestine. Even if the Israeli Government did not use the war as an excuse to step up attacks, there might be attempts to change the situation on the ground in terms of settlements or to harness the political results of the war in its aftermath.

11. The situation on the ground was far from calm. The previous day, five Palestinians (including two children) had been killed in Bethlehem. Three of those killed had been the victims of an assassination attempt. Entry to the city had been practically blocked by the Israeli separation wall that had already been used to appropriate Palestinian land. The wall was a constant source of conflict, and confiscation of land and assassinations continued as Ariel Sharon attempted to secure occupation of up to one third of the land on the West Bank.

12. His last point related to the Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement that had taken place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2003. He expressed his appreciation for the statement on Palestine that cited settler colonialism as the main obstacle to the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the achievement of a peaceful solution. The statement called for the reversal of such colonialism and the application of legal remedies without impunity to war crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Conference had discussed the revitalization of the NAM Committee on Palestine, which could usefully complement its United Nations counterpart. The statement on Palestine also stressed the need for Israeli representation in the work of the General Assembly and international conferences in order to comply with international law.

13. Such texts required specific action by States at individual, regional and international levels, including specific measures to apply the fourth Geneva Convention. The results of that summit were a rich basis for ongoing work towards resolving the situation on the ground and towards a reconsideration of certain policies in the interests of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.

14. **Mr. Zackheos** (Cyprus) said that, given the dire economic situation of Palestine, his country was increasing its annual contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) by 80 per cent. In response to the emergency appeal, its contribution for the current year would increase by 300 per cent. He hoped that Palestinian rights would be realized on a practical level through the establishment of a State.

15. **Mr. Percaya** (Indonesia) proposed sending a delegation to assist Mr. Arafat in Ramallah, thereby demonstrating the Committee's support for the Palestinian people and its inalienable rights.

16. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) welcomed the proposal of the Malaysian representative and agreed that a show of solidarity was appropriate, despite the fact that the occupying Power might attempt to obstruct such a move.

17. **Mr. Abbas** (Observer for the League of Arab States) said that the war in Iraq should not divert attention from the Palestinian cause. The Committee should intensify efforts to avoid the situation in Palestine being sidelined.

**United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, 13-14 May, and Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 15 May 2003, Kyiv**

18. **The Chairman** thanked the Ukrainian authorities for their offer to host the events and introduced Working Paper No. 1 relating thereto.

19. *The Committee took note of Working Paper No. 1.*

20. **Mr. Kulyk** (Ukraine) said he was confident that the meetings would contribute to international efforts to promote lasting justice and peace in the region.

**Report by the Chairman on his attendance at the Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, Kuala Lumpur, 20-25 February 2003**

21. **The Chairman** reported that the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had decided to admit Timor-Leste and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as new members, and had decided to hold its next Conference in Cuba. The documents adopted included a declaration on continuing the revitalization of the Non-Aligned Movement, a statement on Iraq, a statement on Palestine, the report of the Rapporteur-General and the final document.

22. In the statement on Palestine and the relevant section of the final document, the Non-Aligned Movement had condemned the continued destruction of Palestinian society and the Palestinian Authority by the Israeli occupying forces and called for their immediate withdrawal to positions held prior to September 2000 and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Conference had urged Israel to apply the fourth Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocol without prejudice to the fight against war crimes and the role of the International Criminal Court. The Conference had reiterated that Israeli representation in the work of the General Assembly and international conferences should comply with international law and that Israeli credentials should not cover the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The Movement had welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Summit of the League of Arab States in Beirut on 28 March 2002, expressed its support for the "road map" drawn up by the Quartet and regretted the absence of President Yasser Arafat. It had also encouraged the necessary international presence and initiatives such as the NAM visit to Palestine in 2002.

23. In its final document, the Conference had reaffirmed the illegality of all Israeli measures in the Syrian Golan and called for the restoration of Syrian sovereignty. The Heads of State or Government had also reaffirmed Lebanon's right to defend its territories and their support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

24. Following the Thirteenth NAM Summit, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) had held an informal summit on Iraq and the Middle East on 26 February 2003. At the summit, delegations had expressed their concerns over a war with Iraq without Security Council approval and the damaging consequences for the situation in the Middle East and in Palestine in particular.

25. **Mr. Mohd Isa** (Malaysia) said that, as Chair of NAM, his country remained committed to the Palestinian cause. The situation in the occupied territories had been illustrated by the fact that President Arafat had been obliged to address the summit on video rather than in person.

**Other matters**

26. **The Chairman** said that on 18 March 2003 he had received from the Permanent Observer for the African Union to the United Nations a note verbale communicating the wish of the Commission of the African Union to participate as an observer in the work of the Committee. The admission of the African Union as an observer would fill a long-standing gap. The African Union, and its predecessor the Organization of African Unity, had consistently supported the Committee's mandate, objectives and activities.

27. He took it that the Committee wished to grant the request of the Commission of the African Union to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer.

28. *It was so decided.*

29. **Mr. Kébé** (Observer for the African Union) said that it was appropriate for the African Union to play an observer role on the Committee. Its summits regularly discussed the Palestinian issue, and the organization had adopted the unwavering stance that President Yasser Arafat was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. President Arafat had taken part in Organization of African Unity and African Union summits since 1971, except for the 2002 summit in Durban, which he had been unable to attend for well-known reasons.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.271

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 June 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 271st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 6 May 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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Election of the Rapporteur of the Committee

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People (15-16 July) and Consultations with civil society organizations, 16 July 2003, United Nations Office at Geneva

Accreditation of civil society organizations with the Committee

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03-34806 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Election of the Rapporteur of the Committee**

2. **The Chairman** said that Mr. Bazan (Malta), the former Permanent Representative of Malta and Rapporteur of the Committee, had left New York in March 2003 to take up a new assignment. He welcomed Mr. Camilleri, the new Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, and nominated him for the office of Rapporteur.

3. *Mr. Camilleri (Malta) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.*

4. **Mr. Camilleri** (Malta), Rapporteur, said that it was the third time that he would be directly involved in the Committee's work and the second time as Rapporteur. Malta would continue to contribute to the efforts aimed at enabling the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights. The Committee's task had been and continued to be to promote those rights with all the persuasiveness available to the international community. Despite many setbacks, important progress had been achieved in the universal recognition of the basic rights of the Palestinian people to a State of its own. Recent developments had opened a window of opportunity for peaceful progress on the question of Palestine. However, the optimism generated as a result should be tempered with caution.

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

5. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Quartet had formally introduced the three-phased road map to the Israeli and Palestinian sides and to other parties involved in the Middle East peace process. The road map was aimed at ending all violence, military attacks and acts of terror as well as achieving a final settlement based on a two-State solution by 2005.

6. In the first phase, both sides must issue unequivocal statements. Palestine would reiterate Israel's right to exist in peace and security, call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to end armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis everywhere and call for all official Palestinian institutions to end incitement against Israel. Israel, for its part, had to affirm its commitment to the vision of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State living in peace and security alongside Israel, as requested by President Bush, and call for an immediate end to violence against Palestinians everywhere. Furthermore, all official Israeli institutions would end incitement against Palestinians.

7. The Palestinian side had unequivocally accepted the road map. Regrettably, Israel appeared reluctant to do so. He hoped that discussions and developments in the coming weeks would lead to an appropriate beginning of implementation, rather than provide a cover for further Israeli tactical positions to bury the road map, as had been the case in the past. He was not very optimistic, however. Such pessimism was borne out by the fact that just a few hours after the formal presentation of the road map, the Israeli occupying forces had staged an offensive with tanks and helicopter gunships against a neighbourhood in Gaza City, killing 13 Palestinians, including a two-year-old boy. Furthermore, current political statements by Israeli officials clearly showed an unwillingness to proceed with implementation of the road map.

8. He reiterated Palestine's acceptance of the document and its willingness to proceed with its implementation, stressing that it should not be renegotiated. In that regard, he called on the international community to apply the necessary pressure so as to ensure immediate and faithful adherence to the content of the road map. Referring to the ongoing attempts by the Security Council to adopt a presidential statement in that regard, he noted that the wording of the resolutions produced thus far was weak, neither providing for necessary support nor calling for the actual implementation of the road map. His delegation was hopeful that the Council would adopt a more coherent, and forceful position that would send the correct signal to the two parties.

9. Prior to the formal presentation of the road map, Palestinian officials had taken several additional steps to restructure several institutions in the Palestinian Authority, including the establishment of a new post of Prime Minister following the amendment of the Palestinian Basic Law. Mahmoud Abbas, the first Prime Minister appointed by the President of the Palestinian Authority, had presented his new cabinet,

which had been approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council.

10. Those steps should help to push the process forward. However, the task had not been easy, as the Palestinians functioned under Israeli occupation and oppression. The crux of the matter in the Middle East remained the Israeli Government's refusal to accept the internationally adopted parameters for a political settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, to end the occupation of Arab land, and to allow the establishment of a Palestinian State on the territory that was occupied in 1967, including east Jerusalem. Without a clear change in that basic position, no effort or road map could lead to the conclusion of a comprehensive and final peace in the Middle East.

11. **The Chairman** said that only serious and determined efforts by the Quartet and the international community, especially its most powerful and influential members, would turn the road map into a peace process. He then read out the text of a proposed statement to the press expressing the Committee's support for the road map:

> "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People welcomes the formal presentation on 30 April 2003 of 'A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', as well as other important developments of recent weeks, notably the confirmation by the Palestinian Legislative Council of the new Palestinian Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas. For many months, the Quartet of international mediators — the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations — has been intensively engaged with the Israelis, Palestinians and others with a view to drafting a plan that would realize the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security by 2005.
>
> "In this regard, the Committee stresses the need for both sides to accept and fully comply with the road map, begin its implementation without delay, and continue to cooperate with members of the Quartet and other facilitators. Our Committee, for its part, supports the parties in this historic undertaking aimed at bringing peace to the region on the basis of Security Council resolution 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), agreements signed previously, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit.
>
> "The Committee also appeals to the Security Council to express its support for the road map and remain fully engaged on the issue."

He took it that the Committee wished to approve the statement.

12. *It was so decided.*

13. **Mr. Farhadi** (Afghanistan) said that his delegation welcomed the press statement, as the Committee's acceptance of the road map was essential in moving the process forward. Moreover, his delegation especially welcomed the election of the representative of Malta to the post of Rapporteur. Malta would accede to full membership in the European Union in the very near future, thus achieving the goal of participation by a member of the European Union in the work of the Committee.

**United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People (15-16 July) and Consultations with civil society organizations, 16 July 2003, United Nations Office at Geneva**

14. **The Chairman** drew attention to the provisional programme of work for the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People and the consultations with civil society organizations, to be held in Geneva on 15 and 16 July 2003, as contained in Working Paper No. 2, which had been circulated to members. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme for the two events.

15. *It was so decided.*

16. **The Chairman** said that the Committee delegation to those events would be composed of the representatives of Cuba and Afghanistan, Vice-Chairmen of the Committee, the representative of Malta, Rapporteur, the Observer for Palestine and himself.

**Accreditation of civil society organizations with the Committee**

17. **The Chairman** drew attention to Working Paper No. 3, which contained the applications from 12 non-governmental organizations that had expressed the

wish to be accredited with the Committee. The Bureau of the Committee had reviewed the applications and had concluded that they were recognized local, national or international non-profit organizations. They had declared their support for the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily its right to self-determination. They had also demonstrated that they had programmes in support of the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Therefore, the Bureau suggested that they should be accredited.

18. He took it that the Committee approved the applications before it and decided to accredit those organizations.

19. *It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.272

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 June 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 272nd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 19 June 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

## Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

Report by the Chairman on the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, 13 and 14 May 2003, and Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 15 May 2003, Kyiv

United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, 4 and 5 September 2003, United Nations Headquarters

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

03-40237 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

2. **The Chairman** said that there had been major developments since the previous meeting of the Committee. The first meetings had taken place between Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Government of Israel had formally accepted the road map proposed by the Quartet, and summits had been held in Sharm el-Sheikh (3 June 2003) and Aqaba (4 June 2003).

3. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that, notwithstanding the developments which the Chairman had enumerated, the situation in the Middle East remained unclear and full of contradictions. The formal presentation of the road map had been greeted with great enthusiasm and positive expectations, but the Palestinian side had been disheartened by the events since that time.

4. It took the view that Israel had created a major problem by seeking to escape the first and most fundamental obligation of the peace process: acceptance of the road map itself. While the Government of Israel had expressed support for the steps contained in the road map, it had coupled that approval with 14 points, sometimes described as "reservations" and sometimes described as "understandings". The Palestinian side believed that those 14 points would hamper the smooth implementation of the road map itself.

5. The Sharm el-Sheikh summit between President Bush and Arab leaders and the Aqaba summit between President Bush and Prime Ministers Sharon and Abbas had been a sign of the United States administration's desire to pursue the road map. At Aqaba, the Israeli and Palestinian sides had been expected to make statements using the language specified in the road map itself. The Palestinian statement had been precisely in line with the requirements of the road map and had even gone beyond those requirements, in the hope of improving confidence on both sides. By contrast, the Israeli statement had fallen far short of the requirements of the road map by failing to declare an end to violence against Palestinians everywhere, failing to give a commitment to the vision of a sovereign Palestinian State and failing to declare an end to all settlement activity (it had referred only to unauthorized outposts). The perception of the Palestinian people was that the results of the Aqaba summit had been unbalanced and had not provided a good beginning for the implementation of the road map.

6. Another development, only a day after the Aqaba summit, had been all but ignored by the media, which tended to focus on what it viewed as Palestinian wrongdoing. Israeli forces had assassinated two Palestinians in a raid near Tulkarem. A cycle of violence by Palestinians, extrajudicial killings by Israel, Palestinian suicide bombings and more extrajudicial killings by Israel (resulting in civilian deaths) had followed.

7. Despite the situation, Palestinian efforts to pave the way for acceptance of a bilateral ceasefire between all Palestinian groups and Israel had continued. However, Palestinians had been left with the impression that extrajudicial killings and other attacks on Palestinian targets had become Israeli Government policy. A ceasefire was still achievable, but only if the Government of Mr. Sharon was sincere in pursuing the road map.

8. There had been some positive developments in the situation in the Middle East, however; Egypt had made efforts to move the peace process forward, a meeting of the Quartet Principals would take place in Amman on 22 June, and a visit by United States Secretary of State Colin Powell had been scheduled. The Quartet should be more active, since there had been little high-level activity recently, and there should be full and continuous involvement of all its members. The Quartet should also put an end to negative attitudes towards the President of the Palestinian Authority, who had been a de facto prisoner of the Israeli authorities for a year and a half. Such attitudes made it illogical and unreasonable to expect the Palestinians to take part in meaningful discussions for a ceasefire and would endanger the peace process. The Palestinian side felt that it had gone out of its way to fulfil its obligations by accepting the road map and by adopting the internal measures needed to implement it. The international community, and particularly the Quartet, had so far failed to exert enough pressure to obtain the same level of commitment from Israel.

9. There had also been some positive developments at the United Nations. The Secretariat's monthly briefing for the Security Council, given on 13 June 2003 by Mr. Prendergast, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, had been objective and fully in line with the Organization's established legal and political position, as well as being a reasonable response to the events and political situation on the ground. Although the Palestinian side had disagreed with some aspects of the briefing, it had regarded it as a considerable improvement over the previous briefing, given by Mr. Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

10. The Non-Aligned Movement summit held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February 2003 had also lent support to Palestinians. A section of the Final Document and a separate statement on Palestine had proposed measures which would need to be followed up and implemented.

11. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt) said that he wished to make some observations in reaction to the summary of the situation in the Middle East given by the Observer for Palestine. They were personal observations rather than reflecting the official position of his delegation.

12. Firstly, he agreed that the briefing given to the Security Council by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on 13 June had been balanced. It had indicated that the flagrant practices of the Israeli authorities on the ground could not be ignored; two thirds of it had been devoted to describing the humanitarian plight and dire economic situation of the Palestinians. Secondly, it was clear that Israel had been reluctant to accept the road map but had done so under pressure from the United States of America. Israel's reluctance had been rooted in the road map's path of "parallelism" rather than "sequentialism". There were already signs that the Government of Israel was abandoning the first approach in favour of the second. A sequential approach could not fail to further the interests of Israel at the expense of the interests of the Palestinians. Thirdly, the briefing's portrayal of the trigger for the cycle of violence following the Sharm el-Sheikh and Aqaba summits had been inaccurate. The first event it had reported was the killing of four Israel Defence Forces soldiers on 8 June, and it had interpreted that event as having provoked the Israeli attempt to assassinate Hamas member Mr. Rantisi two days later. In fact, the assassination of two Palestinians had predated the killing of the four Israeli soldiers.

13. On the day of the attack on Mr. Rantisi, a British Broadcasting Corporation documentary had commented that it was not clear what more the Palestinians could do, having accepted the road map and made positive statements at the Aqaba summit. Palestinians were exercising a right to resist an occupying force, a right enshrined in international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Action against soldiers in occupied territory fell into that category, and although the media often labelled resistance against such occupiers as terrorism, that label was inaccurate.

14. In another United Nations forum, during the informal consultations on the draft General Assembly resolution on the prevention of armed conflict, one paragraph — referring to the root causes of armed conflict, among them foreign occupation — had become a stumbling block. Some delegations were insisting that the term "occupation" should be replaced by the term "illegal acquisition of land". Yet such terminology would blur the issue of the basic entitlement to the land in question and would militate against time-honoured United Nations principles regarding independence and occupation. Its introduction should be resisted at all costs.

15. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) observed that the proposed new terminology was an attempt to change international law and international humanitarian law as commonly understood. It was not possible to address the question of armed conflict while ignoring an essential aspect, that of foreign occupation, which, no matter what its extent or duration, was invariably a factor. The fact that almost half of the instruments of humanitarian law dealt with the protection of civilians under foreign occupation testified to that. Also, a recent instance of the occupation of one nation by another constituted a fresh reminder. The issue went beyond that of the situation in the Middle East to the basic rules, values and international legal norms by which the United Nations was governed. Palestine was adamantly opposed to any attempt to tamper with them. His delegation hoped that as many delegations as possible would also oppose the proposed changes to the contested paragraph in the draft resolution on the prevention of armed conflict.

16. **The Chairman** said he was sure that all members of the Committee shared the views just expressed.

**Report by the Chairman on the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, 13 and 14 May 2003, and Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 15 May 2003, Kyiv**

17. **The Chairman** reported that a Committee delegation, consisting of himself, the Permanent Representatives of Cuba, Malta, Namibia and Ukraine and the Permanent Observer for Palestine and accompanied by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, representing the Secretary-General, had participated in the two meetings, which had been attended by representatives of 46 countries, Palestine and 2 intergovernmental and 13 non-governmental organizations, as well as members of the national and the foreign press and figures from the academic world, artistic and cultural circles and other segments of civil society.

18. The designated theme of the International Meeting had been "Promoting a comprehensive dialogue on the political, security and economic factors critical for resolving the current crisis and resuming the peace process". A number of conclusions and recommendations had been set out in the Final Document of the Meeting, which had subsequently been discussed at the Public Forum.

19. Reviewing the disquieting situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, the participants in the International Meeting had denounced Israel's building of a wall of separation and its expansion of settlements. In the face of the disastrous economic situation in Palestine, they had drawn attention to the Occupying Power's responsibilities under the Geneva Conventions and had called for a substantial mobilization of humanitarian aid.

20. Surveying the various recent bilateral and international initiatives, the participants had considered possible ways of overcoming the current impasse and relaunching the peace talks. Note had been taken of a few encouraging developments, such as the appointment and confirmation of a new Palestinian Prime Minister, the visit to the Middle East by the United States Secretary of State, and the road map put forward by the Quartet. The road map, calling for a negotiated settlement on the basis of a two State solution, had generally been well received by delegations, which had urged the Security Council to endorse it and demand its immediate implementation, with both sides making reciprocal parallel concessions. The offer by Ukraine to use its good offices to further negotiations between the parties on the implementation of the road map had been welcomed.

21. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) expressed appreciation for the fine manner in which Ukraine had hosted the two international gatherings and for its support for the Palestinian cause.

22. **Mr. Kulyk** (Ukraine) said that he believed the meetings had made a contribution to overcoming the impasse in the Middle East. It was particularly important that they had been held at that critical juncture, with full United Nations support. The International Meeting had, it should be noted, been the first to address the road map and to formally endorse it.

23. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to take note of his report on the Kyiv meetings.

24. *It was so decided.*

**United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, 4 and 5 September 2003, United Nations Headquarters**

25. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft provisional programme for the forthcoming International Conference as set out in working paper No. 4, which had been circulated to members.

26. *It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 11:45 a.m.*

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.273

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 273rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 5 August 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

## Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Report by the Chairman on the Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Maputo, 4-12 July 2003

Report by the Chairman on the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Geneva, 15 and 16 July 2003, and the Consultations with Civil Society Organizations, United Nations Office at Geneva, 16 July 2003

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

03-45967 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Report by the Chairman on the Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Maputo, 4-12 July 2003**

**Report by the Chairman on the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Geneva, 15 and 16 July 2003, and the Consultations with Civil Society Organizations, United Nations Office at Geneva, 16 July 2003**

2. **The Chairman**, presenting his report on the Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, said that the Executive Council had devoted considerable attention to the question of Palestine and the Middle East. Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestinian Minister for Foreign Affairs, had described to the Council the tragic plight of the Palestinian people. Thanking the Member States of the African Union for their constant support, he had urged them to continue their search for a solution to Palestinian issues. He had called on the countries of Africa and the international community to apply increased pressure on Israel to implement the Quartet's road map to peace (S/2003/529) of 7 May 2003, on an unconditional basis and without delay. Following a lively debate, the Executive Council had voted to reiterate its long-standing support for Palestinian rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination, and the right to create an independent, viable State. Furthermore, it had denounced the Israeli occupation and its continued building of settlements. Those two factors were the main obstacles to the realization of those rights and to the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Israel should honour its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant additional Protocol, without prejudice to efforts to combat impunity for war crimes or to the role of the International Criminal Court. The two parties should implement the road map without delay and without modification. The Executive Council was in favour of an international presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, to protect the civilian population and assist the parties in implementing the concluded agreements. Israel had an obligation to conform to international law. The Executive Council had condemned the measures imposed by Israel on Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and pledged its full support to Mr. Arafat.

3. With regard to the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, he noted that Mr. Kaddoumi had conveyed to the Session the message of peace sent by Mr. Arafat.

4. Presenting his report on the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People and the Consultations with Civil Society Organizations, he noted that the purpose of the Seminar had been to discuss the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, caused by almost three years of violence. The deep humanitarian crisis and the dire living conditions of the Palestinian people were of special concern to the Committee. The road map stipulated a series of specific steps aimed at improving the humanitarian and economic situation in the region. Implementing those provisions and creating an appreciable change for the better on the ground were vital for the Palestinian people and crucial for the overall success of the road map. The Seminar had given the international community a chance to help normalize the life of the Palestinian people. Its three main themes had been the dimensions of the Palestinian crisis, priorities for humanitarian and economic assistance, and strategies for the future Palestinian economy.

5. The Seminar had been very successful. The panel presentations and the ensuing discussions had highlighted the dismal conditions of the Palestinians, the wide-scale destruction of infrastructure and property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the steady deterioration of the Palestinian economy. Although it had already been two months since the parties had begun implementing the road map, no tangible results had been seen by the average Palestinian. Seminar participants had identified the reduction of unemployment and poverty as the main priority, with respect to assistance. Sustainable development was impossible without a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

6. The report of the Seminar would be prepared by the Secretariat and presented to the forthcoming fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. It would also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights. The Committee delegation had also taken advantage of its presence in Geneva to engage in informal talks with the Committee on Middle East Questions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The two Committees had agreed to continue and expand the involvement of parliamentarians of different backgrounds in the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee.

7. The Committee's consultations with representatives of non-governmental organizations had been very concrete and useful. The Committee delegation had encouraged the organizations present to maintain their principled positions in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to make their constituencies aware of the root cause of the conflict: the occupation of Palestinian land by Israel.

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

8. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) recalled the positive atmosphere that had reigned at the formal presentation of the road map in April 2003. On that occasion, the Palestinian side had expressed its unequivocal acceptance of the road map and its readiness to fully implement it. However, the Israeli side had been rather vague in its acceptance and had submitted a long list of so-called "concerns" and conditions, which had cast a shadow of doubt over the possibilities for honest implementation of the document.

9. At the Aqaba summit, the Palestinian statement had been in line with the requirements of the road map and had even gone beyond them, whereas Israel had failed to declare its official acceptance of a sovereign Palestinian State or a cessation of violent activities. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Authority had persevered in its efforts and had been successful in obtaining the agreement of all national groups to a three-month ceasefire.

10. Unfortunately, the positive atmosphere had been poisoned by the persistence of a number of restrictions imposed by the occupying Power on the movement of persons and goods within the Occupied Territory and on settlement activities in certain areas, including Gaza. In addition, up to 7,000 Palestinian prisoners were being unlawfully held by the Israeli authorities, who maintained that their release was not required under the terms of the road map. However, most of those prisoners had been detained after the road map had been accepted by the Quartet, and it was clear that, under those circumstances and while Mr. Arafat remained under house arrest, there could be no honest implementation of the agreement.

11. A high-level Palestinian delegation had, the previous week, visited Washington to discuss, inter alia, ways of strengthening bilateral relations with the United States. Following that visit, the Palestinian side had had high hopes of a substantial improvement in the situation in the Middle East, but those hopes had been dashed a few days later, when Mr. Sharon had visited Washington and expressed his Government's intention to proceed with settlement activities, in particular the construction of the wall of separation.

12. According to the Israeli side, the wall was intended as a protective measure. However, its construction was a clear form of settlement activity: it cut right through Palestinian territory and would result in the confiscation of large swathes of Palestinian land, isolate communities from one another and destroy their livelihoods. Furthermore, it completely encircled the city of Qalqilya, leaving only one gate for its citizens to enter and exit the city. That type of repression had no historical precedent: even the apartheid regime in South Africa had not resorted to such practices.

13. The previous day, at a meeting of the Knesset, Mr. Sharon had stated that the Israeli side had not yet given anything to the Palestinians. For once, his assertion had been correct. The wall of separation, the pursuit of settlement activities and the repeated attacks on holy sites in the Occupied Territory had made it impossible to conceive of any reasonable implementation of the road map.

14. All the members of the Quartet, supported by other international bodies, including the United Nations Security Council, must step up their efforts to find a solution to the conflict. In that regard, he stressed the importance of establishing the monitoring mechanism agreed upon in the road map, since it would contribute significantly towards ensuring that that agreement was implemented in a reasonable fashion.

15. The United Nations had a permanent responsibility to the Palestinian question until such a time as a genuine and lasting settlement had been reached. A new campaign to undermine the organization and its work had been launched by Mr. Sharon, on the pretext that United Nations resolutions and action were anti-Israeli. That claim was obviously nonsensical, since the Organization was not in the business of taking sides but had merely condemned the unlawful acts carried out by the Israeli side which violated the human rights of the Palestinian people and prevented the resolution of the conflict. The United Nations must continue to uphold international law and to support the full and honest implementation of the road map and must not succumb to outside pressure from any side.

16. He remained cautiously optimistic that the efforts of the Quartet and the international community as a whole would contribute towards improving the situation in the Middle East. Indeed, a potentially positive development had been announced that very day, namely, that the United States was considering reducing its loan guarantees to Israel if it persisted in its efforts to build the wall of separation.

17. **The Chairman** said that the construction of the security wall was an extremely important issue which merited further study by the Committee. He intended to include that issue as an agenda item or sub-item at a future meeting.

*The meeting rose at 11:30 a.m.*

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.274

General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 October 2003

Original: English

# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 274th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 9 October 2003, at 11.30 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

## Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Report by the Chairman on the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, held on 4 and 5 September 2003, at United Nations Headquarters, New York

Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly

Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

Other matters

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Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

03-55298 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Report by the Chairman on the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, held on 4 and 5 September 2003, at United Nations Headquarters, New York**

2. **The Chairman** said that the Conference had coincided with yet another escalation of confrontation and violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had brought the political process to a halt. The Israeli Government had decided to construct a separation barrier, large segments of which would cut deeply into the Palestinian Territory. Accordingly, the Plan of Action adopted at the close of the Conference put the focus of civil society initiatives on mobilizing worldwide action against the construction of the separation wall, and participants had sent a letter in that regard to the Secretary-General and the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

3. The theme, "End the Occupation", had provided the common denominator for a diverse group of over 140 civil society organizations, including Palestinian and Israeli groups, American-Arab and American-Jewish organizations, and Christian, Muslim and Jewish organizations, all of whom were in agreement that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land must end. Governmental delegations, intergovernmental organizations, media representatives and students had also attended.

4. In addition to the speeches, there had been a screening of two documentaries and an exhibit showing the repercussions of the construction of the separation wall on the Palestinian population. All plenary sessions had been shown on United Nations Television and webcast on the United Nations web site. The report of the Conference would be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights, and copies of the Plan of Action and the letter to the Secretary-General had been posted on the Division's "Question of Palestine" web site.

5. Members of the Steering Committee of the Conference had done an excellent job and had also taken it upon themselves to form an international coordinating network of non-governmental organizations on Palestine to follow up on the proposed initiatives. In that laudable endeavour, they were asking the Committee for its cooperation.

**Consideration of the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly** (A/AC.183/2003/CRP.2)

6. **Mr. Camilleri** (Rapporteur) introduced the draft report of the Committee, which provided an update on developments on the ground and on efforts to resume the political process. The draft report outlined the Committee's objectives and general perspective on the events of the past year, summarized the General Assembly mandates given to the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information and reviewed in some detail the situation on the ground and actions taken by the Committee to promote Palestinian rights in the United Nations. It also gave an account of the implementation of the work of the Committee and the Division, and the work of the Department of Public Information.

7. In its conclusions and recommendations, the Committee expressed concern at the lack of serious headway in the political process and emphasized that the United Nations should maintain permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it was satisfactorily resolved in accordance with United Nations resolutions. It also stressed the critical peacemaking role of the Security Council and called upon the Security Council and the General Assembly to stop the de facto annexation of Palestinian land and the construction of the wall.

8. **The Chairman** apologized for the fact that the draft report was available only in English. Once it was adopted, it would be translated into all the official languages. In view of the constantly changing and tense situation on the ground, it might be necessary to update the report.

9. He invited the Committee to consider the report chapter by chapter.

10. *Chapters I to VII were adopted.*

11. *The draft report as a whole was adopted.*

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem**

12. **The Chairman** said that, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, he had made a statement

during the Security Council debate of 16 September 2003 on a draft resolution which would inter alia have demanded that Israel cease any threat to the safety of the President of the Palestinian Authority. The draft resolution had not been adopted because one permanent member of the Council had cast a negative vote.

13. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the Palestinian position on action that the General Assembly should take at the current session — endorsed by both the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference — had been circulated to all Member States. The Palestinian Authority put priority on enforcing and updating past resolutions; ensuring that the Israeli credentials, when approved, were expressly understood as not applying to the Occupied Territory, including Jerusalem, a point endorsed also by the African Union; taking more forceful action against the Israeli war crimes of the past three years; and calling for the dismantling of the separation wall that Israel was constructing.

14. At its meeting on 16 September 2003, the Security Council had considered a draft resolution demanding that Israel desist from any act of deportation and cease any threat to the safety of the elected President of the Palestinian Authority; the draft resolution had not been adopted because the United States exercised its veto. On 19 September 2003, the General Assembly at its resumed tenth emergency special session had succeeded in adopting a similar draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.12). The overwhelming number of votes in favour of the resolution reflected the true position of the international community.

15. At their latest meeting on 26 September, the Quartet members had held tense discussions on the situation in the Middle East, in the course of which they had reaffirmed the need for both parties to implement the road map and for Israel to cease all settlement activity. The summary read out after the meeting on behalf of the Quartet had not been balanced, reflecting as it did the position of one member only; but in his personal remarks at the time, the Secretary-General had said that bold steps in keeping with the road map were now necessary to salvage peace. No doubt he had had in mind an earlier proposal for a robust international force mandated by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

16. His delegation had requested an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the separation wall; the Non-Aligned Movement was at that very moment discussing a proposed draft resolution on the matter. The moment of truth had come: either Israel stopped undermining the Palestinian State and the possibility of peace, or it was the end of a two-State solution and the start of a perpetual conflict. The inauguration of a new Palestinian Cabinet by the Legislative Council of the Palestinian Authority could conceivably pave the way for whatever steps were still possible for a resumption of the peace process. Yet the situation was bleak.

17. **The Chairman** said that the Committee must reflect and act upon a number of the important points raised by the Observer for Palestine, particularly those relating to the separation wall, whose construction could only lead to an explosive situation, and the threats against President Arafat's life.

18. He drew attention to an article that had appeared in *The International Herald Tribune* on 6 September 2003, written by an Israeli former Speaker of the Knesset and current Labour Party deputy, Avraham Burg, in which he recognized the desperation, humiliation and hatred that fuelled the Palestinian suicide bombings and condemned the Israeli Government for abandoning ethical leadership, refusing to evacuate all settlements and establish internationally recognized borders, and for the racism that was undermining Israeli democracy and the Jewish State itself.

**Other matters**

19. **The Chairman** recalled that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People would be commemorated on 1 December 2003.

20. He informed the Committee that two members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority would be participating in the Committee's 2003 training programme for Palestinian professional staff, and would be working with the Division for Palestinian Rights during the current session of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.*

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# Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**Summary record of the 275th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 11 November 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

*Chairman*: Mr. Fall ..... (Senegal)

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03-60847 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

**Consideration of draft resolutions on the question of Palestine**

2. **The Chairman** drew attention to four draft resolutions, entitled respectively "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat" and "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", which were to be submitted to the General Assembly under agenda item 39 entitled "Question of Palestine". The texts, which were based on the resolutions adopted at the fifty-seventh session, had been streamlined and updated to reflect recent developments.

3. The draft resolution on the Committee, contained two new paragraphs (the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 6). The sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine was also new. No substantive changes had been made to the draft resolution on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.

4. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolutions on the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information.

5. *It was so decided.*

6. **The Chairman**, drawing attention to some substantive changes to the draft resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine" said that the tenth preambular paragraph had been expanded and that the eleventh, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth preambular paragraphs were new. Paragraph 4 which read "*Calls for* the implementation of the Road Map and stresses in this regard the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism" and paragraph 6, which read "*Stresses* the urgent need for Israel to stop and reverse the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is in contradiction to relevant provisions of international law" were also new.

7. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

8. *It was so decided.*

**Developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem**

9. **The Chairman** recalled that, at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which had been convened at the request of the Arab States because the Security Council had failed to take action on the issue of Israel's separation wall, the Assembly had adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/13 entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The following week the Secretary-General had issued a statement welcoming the Geneva Accord which, while not a substitute for official diplomatic negotiations, was a courageous attempt to break the current stalemate and compatible with the Quartet's peace process. The cabinet formed by the new Palestinian Prime Minister was due to be approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council on 12 November.

10. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the most important development in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been the ongoing construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had led to the confiscation of hundreds of dunums of land, thereby depriving tens of thousands of Palestinians of their livelihood. Completion of the wall would create three to four Bantustans. That situation would render a two-State solution impossible and stymie peace in the region for a long time. For that reason, further construction of the wall must be halted and the existing sections must be dismantled. Owing to one member's veto, the Security Council had been unable to adopt a resolution on the wall. The General Assembly had, however, adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/13, which inter alia requested the Secretary-General to present a report on the wall.

11. Endeavours to streamline the resolutions on Palestine that would be submitted under several General Assembly agenda items had resulted in a decision by the sponsors to present four, rather than the

traditional seven, resolutions on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The United States of America had, however, submitted a draft resolution on the subject without holding prior consultations with the Palestinians and Arabs. In an effort to prevent a different legal and political basis being created for UNRWA's activities the Arab Group had proposed five amendments to the text. When the time came for the draft resolution to be put to the vote the Arab Group would make every effort to prevent its adoption since it would enable the occupying Power to evade its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

12. The draft resolution currently being circulated by Israel in the Third Committee appeared to deal with assistance to Israeli children but was in reality an anti-Palestinian text that dealt with political issues far beyond the competence of that Committee. It must be defeated.

13. The Palestinian position on Israeli credentials was in line with that of the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A perfectly legal objection was being made to having the credentials extend to any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. That reservation was in no way a challenge to the Israeli credentials per se.

14. A draft resolution sponsored by the Russian Federation and endorsing the road map had, unaccountably, been declared not acceptable to the Israeli Government, that would seem to be indicative of Israel's true position on the matter.

15. There had been two noteworthy developments outside the United Nations. An agreement known as the Geneva Understandings had been concluded between politicians from both sides and even though they had no official status, the conclusions reached could be an incentive to restarting formal negotiations. The Israeli reaction had been negative, but the Understandings had received support from the Palestinian side, the Secretary-General and the United States Secretary of State.

16. Also, the newly formed Palestinian government was scheduled to be submitted for approval to the Palestinian Legislative Council the following day and was expected to receive a vote of confidence, allowing it to begin functioning immediately thereafter. Despite outside pressures, Palestine had managed to preserve its presidential system with its symbolic value intact but, by amending the Basic Law, to create an office of prime minister as well, thus achieving a good balance.

**United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine, 16-17 December 2003, and the Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, 18 December 2003, Beijing**

17. **The Chairman** expressed the Committee's gratitude to the Government of China for having agreed to host the two events. The Committee's delegation to Beijing would comprise the two Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and himself, accompanied by the Observer for Palestine. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme for the two meetings set out in working paper No. 5.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **Mr. Xie** Yunliang (Observer for China) welcomed the convening of the two meetings in Beijing and said that his Government intended to work with the secretariat to make them a success.

20. **Mr. Al-Kidwa** (Observer for Palestine) said that the fact that China would be hosting the meetings would give them greater weight. He thanked China for its solidarity with the Palestinian cause over the years and especially for the recent positions it had taken in the Security Council.

**Other matters**

21. **The Chairman** urged all members of the Committee and all observers to arrange to be represented at the forthcoming International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the ambassadorial level, in order to mark its special importance.

*The meeting rose at 11.50 p.m.*